

Call for FOREUM International Fellowships

Introduction

FOREUM is committed to funding and promoting scientific research into rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMD) and has a goal to foster links between rheumatology units in different countries. Consistent with these goals is the establishment of a call for international fellowships that have the specific objective of facilitating the development of research capacity and training high-calibre applicants in RMD research.

Scope

FOREUM International Exchange Fellowships are intended to fund excellent research projects in the field of RMDs that address any basic, translational or clinical aspect of these conditions.

The International Exchange Fellowship is based on two stages:

1. Initial stay in a host centre to be introduced, mentored, and trained in specific techniques, models or patient data that are required to start and successfully conduct the project
2. Subsequent return to the home centre to further develop and complete the research project in a protected academic time through the fellowship.

The fellow will be supported for a period of 12 months to visit the host centre (first stage) and, upon successful completion, for another 24 months in the home centre (second stage).

Eligibility and requirements

The applicant must be a rheumatologist, rheumatologist in training or health professional in rheumatology, who is appropriately linked to RMD research in one of the EULAR member countries. It is anticipated that applicants develop long-term research and clinical interest in the area of the proposal that provides benefit for the fellow, the European RMD research community and patients with RMDs.

The host centre needs to have a high-level research profile in the field allowing the fellow to be exposed to cutting-edge research technology and an inspiring collaborative scientific environment. The host centre needs to be in a EULAR member country different from the country of the applicants' home centre.

Participation of patient research partners from the host centre is strongly encouraged in order to underline the importance of the project for the patients.

Budget

Fellows are eligible to apply for total funding of up to € 150.000.- over 36 months. Up to € 50.000.- would be for funding to visit the host centre and the remainder would be funding to support continuation and development of the project in the home centre after return. Projects will be subject to an evaluation of progress after 1 year (return to home centre) and 3 years (end of fellowship) with written final report. Submitted publications can be used as part of the report.

How to apply

Applications should be made electronically (email to info@foreum.org). Necessary application forms can be downloaded at www.foreum.org.

Letter of intent

All applicants considering submission of a proposal are invited to send a short letter of intent (LoI) by 04 September 2022 to FOREUM (email to info@foreum.org) accompanied by a lay summary. The structure and required content of the letter of intent are described in the 'Letter of Intent template' available from www.foreum.org. Statements for support of the application from the head of the

host centre and the head of the applicant's centre need to be provided. Letters of intent will be assessed by members of the FOREUM Scientific Committee and applications deemed meritorious of full application will be selected on a competitive basis. The Secretariat will respond by 03 October 2022 as to whether the proposal meets the scope, priority and requirements of the call such that a full application will be invited.

Full project proposal

Applicants selected will be invited to submit a full proposal; they will be sent the full project proposal template. In addition to covering scientific aspects of the proposal the value of support in terms of training, transferable skills, and future development of the project beyond the funding period will be important aspects of the full application together with clear evidence of support and necessary infrastructure at the host centre. To facilitate review by patients, additionally a lay summary must be completed. Both forms will be provided to applicants invited to submit a full proposal. Full research proposals must be submitted electronically by 06 November 2022 to the FOREUM Secretariat.

Participation of patient research partners

Participation of patient research partners is strongly recommended for clinical research projects and should be considered for all other research projects to provide experiential knowledge, with the aim of improving the relevance, quality and validity of the research process. Participation of patient research partners would be a strength in developing the proposal to underline the importance of patients providing experiential knowledge in the research process. For more information, please read the material on http://www.eular.org/pare_patient_research_partners.cfm.

Evaluation and decision

The proposals will be independently peer-reviewed for (i) their scientific quality, (ii) the applicant motivation and expertise to conduct research in RMD and (iii) the feasibility of conducting the project in the respective host centre. Based on this peer review, the FOREUM Scientific Committee will make a funding recommendation to the FOREUM Executive Committee, which will make its funding decision. Decisions will be communicated to the applicants by 13 February 2023.

Ethical aspects

FOREUM expects a high standard in the conduct of research it funds. For researchers this includes scientific integrity and adherence to the principles of good research practice. Patients subjected to investigation shall be included with due adherence to the declaration of Helsinki.

Management of the call

The FOREUM call and approval processes will be administered by the FOREUM Secretariat together with the FOREUM Scientific Committee. The call schedule will be as follows:

Timeline

Closing date for Letter of intent:	04 September 2022
Decisions on Letter of intent announced:	03 October 2022
Closing date for full proposals:	06 November 2022
Decisions on full proposals announced:	13 February 2023
Projects to begin by:	TBD

Inquiries

For general inquiries please contact the FOREUM Secretariat at info@foreum.org.